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12.

‘Houses of the dead’? Columnar sarcophagi as ‘micro-architecture’

EDMUND THOMAS

At the end of the twentieth century architects across the world sought to bring architecture closer to humanity. ‘Micro-architecture’ in the form of shelters, street furniture, and inhabitable sculptures, designed as places of retreat or isolation, stimulated creative design.¹ Simultaneously, medieval art historians considered how a ‘micro-architecture’ of religious ornaments and furnishings, reproducing small buildings in miniature, had enabled individual viewers to identify more deeply with heavenly ideals.² Small-scale, sacred architectural forms – reliquaries, censers, screens, stalls, pulpits, fonts and baldachins – triggered emotional responses and offered spiritual refuge.³ As François Bucher claimed, a quarter of a century earlier, these ‘fluidly superimposed systems of decoration’, combining ‘formal bravado with theological complexity in a small space’ and offering ‘dazzling structural dexterity’ and geometric complexity, were exemplars of Gothic style that sheltered the mysteries of Christianity.⁴ Based on an aesthetic vocabulary taken from monumental archetypes, they acquired, through the innovative designs of architects seeking new fields for experimentation, sophisticated forms transcending those larger structures and became almost the *raison d’être* of the buildings housing them. Modern and medieval manifestations of micro-architecture differ in scale, but both make statements about relationships between ideal and real space, between body and soul, between different genres of architecture, and between architecture and the human body.

Classical antiquity knew ample instances of such ‘micro-architecture’, but their religious or philosophical significance has yet to receive similar investigation. Studies, for example, of the small ash urn from Chiusi (Figure 12.1) have focused instead on its potential as a literal representation of an Etruscan house and its use to historians as evidence for larger structures.⁵ Yet,

1 *Micro-architectures* 2000, 29.

2 Boldrick and Fehrmann 2000; *Homes for the Soul* 2000.

3 Bucher 1976.

4 Bucher 1976, 83.

5 Prayon 1986, 193, fig. V.36. On the Chiusi urn, similar ‘models’, and prehistoric precedents: Staccioli 1969; Massari and Setti 2000.



Figure 12.1: House urn from Chiusi. Museo Archeologico, Florence. Photograph: Museum.

unlike the marble or limestone models from Ostia and Niha, which replicate a building's plan accurately and in the latter case with measurements inscribed, Etruscan models have no precise reference to actual buildings.⁶ Their features suggest only symbolic aspects of architecture, bestowing a spiritual or emotional quality to the ashes of the deceased.⁷

With the heavy recent emphasis on the pictorial content of sarcophagus reliefs it is easy to forget that Roman sarcophagi are also architectonic structures. Through their funerary purpose they answered emotional needs like medieval micro-architecture, and accordingly some early forms of the latter incorporated ancient Roman sarcophagi.⁸ With column sarcophagi this architectural aspect is particularly evident. They are sometimes seen as curiosities, a minor chapter in the history of Roman sculpture.⁹ Yet it is misleading to see them as wholly separate. In the subjects of their reliefs column sarcophagi cross boundaries, encompassing almost every theme and even abstract strigillations. This study, therefore, investigates a widespread phenomenon: the desire to place figures or scenes in columnar contexts and to create a semblance of architecture in a

6 For Ostia and Niha, see Wilson Jones 2000, 54–56, figs. 3.9–10.

7 Mansuelli 1970a.

8 See below, final page [insert relevant page number here?].

9 Koch and Sichtermann 1982, 76–80, 503–507.

physically restricted space. It reveals much about Roman perceptions of architectural space and the human body.

Rather than being interpreted in terms of what they literally represent, column sarcophagi should be understood as offering a set of iconic architectural features derived from built contexts that gave them symbolic and emotional potency. Those features had particular force because of the relation between body and soul in Roman views of the afterlife and the widely-held idea that the funerary monument was the resting-place of the soul. They represent above all an architecture of the exterior. The actual recreation of interior space is almost unknown, the extraordinary exception being the sarcophagus from Simpelveld, where even the interior furnishings are carved in micro-relief on the inner face of the chest.¹⁰ The latter may imply a different mortuary culture from elsewhere in the Roman Empire. Yet even there the inner carvings present the outsides of buildings too, producing a remarkable conflation of interior and exterior space. In most cases of micro-architecture, the object alludes only to exterior public space, highlighting the significance of ornament and form.

Reading column sarcophagi

At the start of the twentieth century column sarcophagi entered wider art-historical narratives. In 1899 the Berlin Museums acquired a relief apparently representing Christ and two Apostles and recut from one side of a column sarcophagus, from the district of Samatya (Psamathia) in Istanbul.¹¹ The now famous Psamathia Relief (Figure 12.2) influenced both the Russian art historian Dimitri Ainalov and the Austrian-Silesian scholar Josef Strzygowski, almost simultaneously, but apparently independently, in forming their historic accounts of the origins of later Roman art and culture.¹² For Ainalov, the resemblance of this fragment in its architectural decoration to sarcophagi from Asia Minor helped to support his theory of the 'Hellenistic foundations' of Byzantine art; for Strzygowski, the addition of a number of examples in Italian collections strengthened the case for the Asiatic in the argument 'Orient oder Rom?' That very year, in 1901, the magnificent Sidamara sarcophagus, discovered a quarter of a century earlier, was brought from Cappadocia for display in the Imperial

10 Leiden, Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, I, 130/12.1; Holwerda 1933.

11 Effenberger 1990, 79.

12 Ainalov 1901, 160–164, and 1961, 216; Strzygowski 1901 (opposed to Riegl 1901: see Elsner 2002).

Ottoman Museum in Istanbul.¹³ In the next year, in what remains the only full-length study of the structure and ornamentation of Roman sarcophagi, Walter Altmann cited the 'unzweifelhaft italisch' Melfi sarcophagus (Figures 12.8 and 12.9), found in 1856, as evidence of the western origin of column sarcophagi.¹⁴ But the argument of the 'orientalists' gathered momentum. Further discoveries were made, and a distinct group of Asiatic column sarcophagi, unified above all by their architectural ornament, became established.¹⁵ Studying the sarcophagus of Claudia Antonia Sabina found at Sardis in 1913, Charles Morey produced their first extensive classification, distinguishing eastern examples, including Melfi, from western 'imitations';¹⁶ Marion Lawrence refined understanding of the western versions, considering them much later derivatives of Asiatic works;¹⁷ Hans Wiegartz systematically classified the Asiatic, separating a main group from variant works produced in regional centres such as Aphrodisias and Nicaea;¹⁸ and Marc Waelkens attributed that group to workshops at the marble quarries of Docimeion in Phrygia.¹⁹ The lavish ornament of the Asiatic forms now appeared pre-eminent. The outputs of western workshops were dismissed as a secondary artistic phenomenon based on imitation of the virtuoso creations of sculptors in Asia Minor.

The chronology of column sarcophagi established by Morey and Lawrence on the basis of the style of their portrait heads and the manner of their architectural ornament was refined by Wiegartz to place Asiatic sarcophagi at the forefront of development. He put the first instance from Torre Nova around 145, preceding any western examples by some forty-five years.²⁰ But, if some sarcophagi from western workshops seem to imitate Docimian types, many look wholly independent, and as a whole the western column sarcophagi are formally more diverse and numerically more abundant.²¹ After Peter Kranz re-dated some western examples to the 160s and Waelkens re-dated the Torre Nova sarcophagus to 150/155, it emerged that Docimian column sarcophagi lasted barely a century, from *c.* 150 to *c.* 260, whereas the western versions generally regarded as derivative had earlier, Italic precedents, originated in their definitive

13 Shapley 1923, 72 describes how it took months to transport it there, requiring the construction of special vehicles to bring it to the railway, where it was loaded onto two carriages.

14 Altmann 1902, 55.

15 Morey 1924, 22–25.

16 Morey 1924, 29–59.

17 Lawrence 1932.

18 Wiegartz 1965, 16 f., 50; cf. Morey 1924, 77 (Nicaea); Rodenwaldt 1933; Işık 1984 (Aphrodisias).

19 Waelkens 1982, 105–123.

20 Wiegartz 1965, 43 f., and 19, making the seasons sarcophagus in the Villa Savoia at *c.* 190 'one of the earliest Roman imitations.'

21 Koch and Sichtermann 1982, 76–80, with fig. 3 at 78 f.



Figure 12.2: Reworked fragment of a marble sarcophagus relief from Psamatthia, Istanbul. Antike Sammlungen, Berlin. Photograph: Museum.

form soon after the Docimian instances, and endured over a century longer.²² Kranz argued that it was not Asiatic but earlier Roman traditions of funerary art which influenced the aedicular structure of western column sarcophagi. It even seemed possible that the design of Asiatic instances was partly derived from western prototypes, not *vice versa*.

²² Kranz 1978, 354 f.

Assessing the relationship of Asiatic column sarcophagi with western versions, Guntram Koch²³ suggested two possibilities: first, what he regarded as the unlikelier scenario, that older traditions were followed in Rome during the 160 s with individual column sarcophagi made to order, and for that reason from *c.* 155–160 similar column sarcophagi were imported from Asia Minor in relatively large numbers; or, second, that the few early column sarcophagi made in Rome were imitations of the numerous grander, highly valued imports, using simpler means and indigenous forms, and followed by ‘western’ versions repeatedly copying Asiatic forms.²⁴ In assuming that one or other artistic tradition must have been the stimulus for this funerary practice, Koch adopts a position which not only echoes the old ‘Orient oder Rom?’ debate, but also envisages the workshop at the centre of and primarily responsible for artistic change. However, although Waelkens has conclusively identified the marble and sculptors as Asiatic, important issues are still raised by Gerhard Rodenwaldt’s suggestion, despite its ethnocentric formulation, that the spur for what he called the ‘Hellenising’ manner of the sarcophagi ‘lay not in the ‘Greekness’ of the Hellenic world, but in the drive of Romans to absorb classical models.’²⁵ The character of the Asiatic column sarcophagi as works to order, rather than for stock, suggests that the model of classical architecture that they present was conceived not only by the artists, but by their patrons.²⁶

There has still been no extensive study since Altmann of the architectural structure of Roman sarcophagi and its cultural implications.²⁷ But, as for other periods, their extravagant and distinctive architectural ornament is instructive as a ‘cultural form.’²⁸ Created at the height of the Second Sophistic, column sarcophagi offer a key to debates about Greek and Roman ‘identity’ in Italy and the Greek East during the second and third centuries.²⁹ Even in the East, the few known names of the deceased belong to families of the Roman hierarchy.³⁰ It will be argued here that it was the choice of Roman patrons, in both Italy and the East, in seeking an appropriate form of burial and commemoration for themselves and their families, which lay behind and motivated both the importation of column sarcophagi from Asia Minor and the creation of similar

23 Koch 1982, 171.

24 E.g. the Riccardi wedding sarcophagus in Florence and Velletri sarcophagus (Koch 1980, nos. 8 and 10).

25 Rodenwaldt 1933, 40.

26 Koch 2000.

27 Altmann 1902. But, for one region, see Gabelmann 1977.

28 Hesberg 1990.

29 Borg 2004.

30 E.g. Claudia Antonia Sabina at Sardis, Domitius Iulianus at Perge, Claudius Severinus at Aizanoi, and the asiarch Euethios Pyrrhon at Laodicea: on these instances, see further below.

forms at Rome and elsewhere, and that their decision about what was appropriate was determined by their interests in architecture as a symbolic form. As with houses, socio-cultural factors can be considered more important than environmental or technical ones in determining the form of 'micro-buildings' on sarcophagi.³¹ Such architecture was no mere setting or background, but an important element of the 'visual world' of Roman funerary space, which is reflected in the close relationship between figures and columnar frames.³² Patrons' architectural preferences were influenced not only by a leaning towards classicism and their Italic traditions, but by the character and symbolic discourse of contemporary public architecture. The impetus for the phenomenon of column sarcophagi lay in the tastes of Italian patrons of the Antonine age for both Roman forms and Greek *paideia*.

It is often said that column sarcophagi represent temples or *herōa* for the dead. The temple analogy is already evident in the Polyxena sarcophagus from Gümüşçay (c. 520–500 B.C.), with its lid imitating a tiled roof and prominent Ionic mouldings.³³ The contribution of columns to enhance this model is illustrated by the well-known fourth-century B.C. 'Mourning Women Sarcophagus' from the Royal Cemetery at Sidon.³⁴ Its Ionic pediments and colonnades seem explicitly constructed in the form of a temple, prostyle *in antis*; its Attic ornament mimics works like the Erechtheum; the ladies, whether Muses or individuals of the royal court, seem to stand within its peripteral colonnade.³⁵ That simulated architecture would have acquired added force if installed on a colonnaded tomb comparable in form if not in size to the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus.³⁶ But few, if any, aedicular sarcophagi of the imperial period have the literal equivalence to real architecture to which that work pretends. On the first Docimian column sarcophagi with temple-like pitched roof and antefixes the image of a temple is manifest, but the sides are not conventional temple walls. Some have a continuous frieze to the full height of the walls; others a colonnade with alternate projections and recessions more reminiscent of a portico than a peripteros; others again an arcade. Later forms lose the pitched roof altogether.

A second, equally common answer is that the building evoked by column sarcophagi is the house of the dead, as the presence of the tomb door might confirm. However, as has been observed of tomb buildings interpreted in this

31 Rapoport 1969, 46–82.

32 On sarcophagi images as a *Bilderwelt*, cf. Zanker and Ewald 2004.

33 Sevinç 1996, especially figs. 6 and 8.

34 Istanbul, Archaeological Museum, inv. 368. Palagia 2000, 178 fig. 3. Fleischer 1983, 40–44 discusses the architectural possibilities, deciding in favour of a herōon.

35 Ibid., 66–72.

36 Borchhardt 1984, 45–50, with 58 fig. 10.

way, the pitched 'roofs' of early sarcophagus lids are not characteristic of Roman houses.³⁷ Yet there were other ways to evoke the variegated domestic architecture of the Roman world, and this interpretation may be more plausible for earlier ash urns. However, the majority of column sarcophagi made in western and eastern workshops from the later second to the fourth century evoke not private houses, but public buildings. The 'normal type' of Docimian origin shows similarities to theatres, simulating a *scaenae frons* and sometimes the *pulpitum* below. It also recalls aedicular architecture more generally, of libraries, fountains, and baths. In the west the representation of arcades on sarcophagi has been compared to contemporary street architecture.³⁸ In these cases the symbol is communicated above all by the columnar structure.

The role of the architectural frame in relation to the figures and myths of Roman column sarcophagi is a reflection of the importance of columnar orders in Roman self-representation, itself a development of the analogy between human and column. Visual or verbal analogies, between the capital and the head, fluting and clothing, bases and shoes, tie the two together.³⁹ But, in addition, columns represent the principle of support, an image of human strength: the theories of Vitruvius; the use of Caryatids, telamons, and other support-figures; the load-bearing heroism of Hercules and Aeneas; and the Christian idea of the Apostles as 'columns' of the Church all testify to the idea of man as a column bearing weight and meaning.⁴⁰ On sarcophagi columns establish scale, often a colossal one implied by the elevation of the deceased to a superhuman level, when figures break the human scale implied by the height of an entablature; but they are also markers and interchangeable with human figures. For Romans the visual language of classical architecture was, like other *ornamenta*, a mark of rank (*discrimen*), used to distinguish different social groups.⁴¹ As *decor*, columns both provided adornment and were seen as appropriate and necessary indicators of status.⁴² Their use in Roman houses is well known, from colossal pilasters framing doorways to atria, peristyles and painted orders.⁴³

The placement of column sarcophagi figures on pedestals mirrors the essential dialogue between columns and portrait statues in Roman public buildings. It is well-known how Roman oratorical handbooks considered such

37 Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 42 f.

38 Weidhaas 1968.

39 Rykwert 1996, 27–67.

40 Hearn 1981, 210.

41 Gros 2006, 394; Onians 1988, 29; Gros 1995, 28.

42 Horn-Oncken 1967, 92–117; cf. Vitr. *De Arch.* 6.5.2 (with the political term *maiestas*: OLD, s.v., 1 c, and s.v. *decor*, 1, 3); ibid. 1.2.5.

43 Hales 2003, 103, fig. 27, and 122–138; cf. Pliny, *NH* 17.1 (Crassus); Cic. *Q. Fr.* 3.1.1.

framing of images as an effective mnemonic device.⁴⁴ The practice was plainest in theatres, where the columnar structure of scene buildings created a framework within which the audience could view the symbolic images dominating the stage and structure and interpret the relationships between them.⁴⁵ Statues of exaggerated size fill the intercolumniations of what, on the Haterii relief of buildings, can only be the Colosseum.⁴⁶ In the sanctuary of Palatine Apollo fifty statues of Danaids stood between the columns of the portico.⁴⁷ During the second century this mode of presenting statues to a public audience became characteristic of the architecture of Asia Minor. As the Library of Celsus sheltered allegorical images of its founder's virtues in the columned niches of its aedicular façade, so the gate court of Plancia Magna in Perge appeared like a *scaenae frons*, with statues on pedestals between freestanding columns and projecting entablature.⁴⁸

Tombs too had an audience to address, and funerary art created memorable images.⁴⁹ On funeral stelae and larger monuments images of the deceased appear between columns, highlighting their rank through markers of clothing and columns.⁵⁰ Aedicular tombs were widespread for Italian funerary architecture of the late Republic and early Empire. With togate statues set high up between columns, they expressed not 'personal deification' but social status.⁵¹ Similar schemes were applied to tombs across the Empire.⁵² Sometimes the support metaphor is explicit. The portrait statues of the 'Tower of the Scipios' at Tarragona are enclosed under a flat-arched aedicule on the upper storey, while the cornice below is visually sustained by support figures on pedestals; in 'Mausoleum B' at Sabratha the Ionic columns below frame a tomb door, as on sarcophagi, while Egyptian-looking support figures leaning

44 *Rhet. Her.* 3.16–24; Preisshofen and Zanker 1970–71.

45 Spectacularly, Aemilius Scaurus: Pliny, *NH* 36.189; Sear 2006, 55 f. For Augustan examples: Gros 1987, 338–343.

46 Castagnoli 1941; Stewart 2003, 123 sees 'a city of statues'; cf. Smith 2003, 70 fig. 125.

47 Propertius 2.31.3–4; Ovid, *Tristia* 3.1.61–2. Cf. Quenemoen 2006, 241, with reconstruction.

48 Mansel 1956, 105 f.

49 Epitaphs: Lattimore 1962; Carroll 2006, 126–150; buildings: Thomas 2007a, 183 f.; Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 50–52.

50 E.g. funerary stele from the Via Praenestina (c. 75–50 B.C.): La Regina 1998, 25 fig.; tomb of Sulpicii Platorini: Silvestrini 1987.

51 Of many examples: Sarsina, tomb of Murcius Obulaccus: Aurigemma 1963; Rufus monument: Ortalli 1991. Aquileia, 'great mausoleum': Mirabella Roberti 1997. Pompeii, tomb of the Istacidii: Kockel 1983. Capua, 'La Conocchia': Quilici and Quilici Gigli 2005. *Pace Wrede* 1981, 91, and Stewart 2003, 99–108, especially 102.

52 Glanum: Gros 1986; Beaucaire: Roth-Congès 1987. Cologne, tomb of Publius: Precht 1975; column monuments: Mylius 1925, pl. XI; Kähler 1934. Syria: Tchalenko 1953–58, i, 37 n. 2, pl. LXII.4–6; 122, 141, pls. XLIV, CLXXI.2; 190 f., pls. LXI, LXII.6, LXXXV.3.

outwards from the upper storey remind viewers of the comparability of the column and the human figure.⁵³ At Sádaba the Atilii tomb shows the potential of column sarcophagi to be enlarged: a façade of five arched and pedimented niches framed by pilasters carved with trailing plants, garlands hanging between them.⁵⁴ In another case inscribed verses spell out the complementarity of statues and columns ‘hanging in equal measure’ (*pariter pendere*).⁵⁵

Pillars of Hercules

Exploitation of marble quarries, their developing schools of sculpture, and the distribution of their products brought micro-architecture into its own. Columnar framing was used on ash chests;⁵⁶ sarcophagi, already formed as small monuments with Doric friezes,⁵⁷ were now modelled on buildings.⁵⁸ From the second century the architectural tendency of Roman funerary sculpture became more pronounced. Corner columns and pilasters appeared increasingly on ash chests, sometimes replaced by spiralling plant supports, and sometimes with a little bust in a conch shell below the inscription frame.⁵⁹ A micro-architectural equivalent to Pliny’s *stibadium*, shaded with vines propped by *cipollino* columns, is a house urn once in the Sambon Collection in Paris, which has not only a replica tiled roof, but make-believe tendrils spreading over the walls.⁶⁰ The urn of Publius Volumnius Violens at Perugia seems, like the Chiusi urn before it, to evoke a temple, with Corinthian pilasters at the corners, a simulated tiled roof, lion’s head water-spouts, sphinx acroteria, medusa’s head in

53 Tarragona: Hauschild et al. 1966; Gamer 1982; Gros 1996–2001, ii, 416 fig. 492. Sabratha: Di Vita 1976.

54 Menéndez Pidal 1970.

55 Cillium, monument of the Flavii: *CLE* 1552 = *CIL* VIII 213, lines 46–48; Thomas 2007a, 199.

56 E.g. Celadus, *dispensator* of Claudius: Rome, Capitoline Museum: Stuart Jones, no. 35; Q. Fulvius Priscus, scribe of the curule aediles: La Regina 2005, 84 fig.; cf. Vatican 9815/16 and an urn in the Palazzo Farnese.

57 E.g. Scipio Barbatus, and Peducaea Hilara, Modena: Koch and Sichtermann 1982, 37, 282, pls. 2, 300.

58 E.g. Rome, Museo Nazionale di Villa Giulia. Gasparri 1972 (suggesting early Augustan date); Koch and Sichtermann 1982, 40, pl. 11. The ‘Arcadian’ figures in the arcades are unparalleled.

59 E.g. Vatican 9813/14; Rome, MNR 121649 (ivy-draped pilasters with Ionic capitals: De Luca 1976, 119 no. 64, pl. 101); Mazara del Vallo, Sicily, Cathedral, with tendril pilasters and Corinthian capitals, sphinxes on pilasters, and *dextrarum iunctio* below: Koch and Sichtermann 1982, pls. 39, 41.

60 Now lost. Giuliano 1979, 243 no. 153; Koch and Sichtermann 1982, pl. 16; cf. Pliny, *Ep.* 5.6.36.

the tympanon, double doors, and an inscription on the architrave.⁶¹ In northern Italy aedicular tombs were replaced by open-air sarcophagi with simulated tiled roofs, corner acroteria, and images of the dead under arches in columnar frames.⁶²

At Ephesus, the sarcophagus of Celsus, in the vault below the library in his memory, presents a dialogue between vessel and building. The medusa head in the pediment of the sarcophagus replicates the figures in the pediments on the library's façade. Its front face lacks columns, but its arrangement of winged figures holding garlands, like those hanging from columns at Sádaba, mimics a columnar structure and rhythm; the corner figures look like caryatids.⁶³ For Wiegartz, the architectural mouldings of the cornice make this sarcophagus one of several precursors of column sarcophagi.⁶⁴ Some had lids steeply angled like pitched roofs, most strikingly a sarcophagus from Aydın-Tralles, which, with a circular boss in the pediment and elaborate mouldings, looks like a temple without columns.⁶⁵

On an 'underworld sarcophagus' from Ephesus the architectural implications of the form are developed further.⁶⁶ Again the pediment end of the lid carries a round boss in the tympanum, but now its sloping sides are worked to imitate tiled roofs. On the short side an arch is framed by pilasters, from which a figure emerges, while others sit or stand along the long faces. This main level is supported visually by a smaller frieze along the podium, on which *amorini* holding garlands appear to support the cornice above their heads. This 'micro-building' has three levels of perception: the lid and pediments suggest a temple; the main register seems to represent the house of the dead, with open door on the short side and waiting figures along the front; the lowest level with supporting cupids hints at a theatre *pulpitum*, a locus for sculpture.⁶⁷ The style shows Attic influence, but the conception, with unworked rear, betrays the probable Roman patronage.

It was a small step from these temple-like chests to the addition of a columnar frame on examples belonging to the 'Torre Nova group'. The earliest

61 Haynes 2000, 382 fig. 298, with traditional interpretation as representing a house, but the architectural ornament and bucrania with garlands on the side walls suggest rather a temple; cf. Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 48.

62 Gabelmann 1977, 201 f.

63 Theuer 1953, 43–46, figs. 88–92.

64 Wiegartz 1965, 41.

65 Istanbul, Archeological Museum, inv. 449; Wiegartz 1965, 178 no. 21, pl. 11b-c.

66 Istanbul, Archeological Museum, inv. 2768; Wiegartz 1965, 40 f., 179 no. 36, pl. 14b; Andreae 1963, pl. 34.

67 Retzleff 2007.

known instance may be Afyon A, from Dinar-Apameia, dated to *c.* 150.⁶⁸ This sarcophagus showing the Labours of Hercules between half-columns was intended for an adult; in the surviving fragment the Cretan bull bound by Hercules extends a leg over the adjacent column. But this architectural archetype was favoured for children's sarcophagi. The child's sarcophagus after which the group is named, from a villa at Torre Nova on the Via Labicana (Rome B, *c.* 150–55), presents a theatrical setting in a temple frame.⁶⁹ On the front, the initiation of Hercules is framed by columns;⁷⁰ the figures stand on a raised stage, suggested by the high moulding above the Lesbian cymation, and appear in movement as if in a play; the curtains behind Dionysus on the right also suggest a set. The rear face contains a composed scene of mourning women between Corinthian pilasters, which develops the poses of the 'Mourning Women Sarcophagus' into a range of rectilinear postures of exaggerated classicism. On each side, figures balance architecture: on the far right of the front face, Hecate, in the low relief of the probably Attic model, almost vanishes into the wall like a pilaster on the inner side of the column; on the rear, a lady to the right stands upright like the column beside her, while to the left a seated figure rests her foot against the column base. This theatrical and architectural composition is reinforced by the ornament, which resembles contemporary theatre architecture in Asia Minor.⁷¹

Other children's sarcophagi of the 150 s and 160 s use the same format to present small-scale performances of Hercules' Labours by Cupids and Niobids.⁷² The dialogue between bodies and columns is a frequent motif. On a chest in Richmond, Virginia (*c.* 150–160), Cupids prop each other up playfully between erect columns;⁷³ on Rome H (*c.* 165), perhaps an ostothek, one holds up a bearded companion between plain pilasters, while another raises a mask beside the pilaster capital, demonstrating the man-column analogy.⁷⁴ On a sarcophagus from Side a Cupid supports his staggering companion;⁷⁵ there are simulated tiled roof, lion's head antefixes, and shield with medusa's head in the

68 Buckler *et al.* 1939, 139 no. 413 pl. 73; Wiegartz 1965, 143; Waelkens 1982, 51 no. 1 for the date. (References to column sarcophagi here and below – i.e. as 'Rome A' – follow Wiegartz and Waelkens.)

69 Morey 1924, 44–46, figs. 75–78; Waelkens 1982, 51 f.; Wiegartz 1965, 62 f. and 168.

70 Wiegartz 1965, 58 f.

71 Morey 1924, 45; Waelkens 1982, 123.

72 Antalya L (*c.* 155); Wiegartz 1965, pl. 28; Beirut C (*c.* 160–165): Cumont 1929.

73 Waelkens 1982, 53 f. no. 10, pl. 15.1–4.

74 Palazzo Mattei. Rodenwaldt 1938, figs. 13–16, sees an allusion to Simias's 'Wings'; the provenance given as the Curia Hostilia (Ficoroni 1744) presumably follows the 18th-century toponym referring to the Caelian hill. Once thought modern because of the bearded cupid, it is confirmed as Antonine by Waelkens 1982, 54 no. 13.

75 Wiegartz 1965, 177 no. 9; Waelkens 1982, 61 no. 6 (Side E1); Mansel 1956, 75–78, fig. 31, with implausibly late date, and 1958, 226 f. figs. 34–35.



Figure 12.3: Sarcophagus from Rome, reconstructed from fragments. Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Museum Appropriation Fund, Inv. 21.074. Photograph by Erik Gould, courtesy of the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island.

pediment, but no columns, only winged victories at the corners. The reassembled fragments of a sarcophagus from Rome, now in Providence, Rhode Island (c. 155–160), present pediments, acroteria, lion's head waterspouts, cornice of acanthus leaves, and an egg-and-dart moulding above the figured friezes, but, instead of columns, a figure at each corner emerges from acanthus leaves as from a decorated column base.⁷⁶ The figured scenes embody physical strength: on the front, young men frame a scene of Achilles towing Hector's body before the walls of Troy (Figure 12.3); on the sides, two boxers square up to one another, and a youth lifts a rock as a leopard attacks his companion; on the rear, a bearded man looks on as cupids with hounds fight a lion and panther.⁷⁷

The temple form of the 'Torre Nova' sarcophagi is starkly demonstrated by a reused chest in Ancona, stripped of its reliefs by Christians and converted by crosses inscribed on its walls and roof into a micro-architectural church.⁷⁸ Four Corinthian, spirally-fluted columns at the corners support a pitched roof with triangular pediments, acroteria, heavy raking cornices, and a central boss in the tympanon. The original effect can be inferred from the recently discovered

76 Waelkens 1982, 33 notes the resemblance of the lower cymation moulding to western forms; cf. Weickert 1913, fig. 14. For such *Schmuckbasen*, especially in Flavian Rome: Wegner 1966; Schreier 1995.

77 Waelkens 1982, pls. 9.1–2.

78 Wiegartz 1965, 144, pl. 26.

sarcophagus of Claudius Severinus and his wife Berenice at Aizanoi (c. 160).⁷⁹ The deceased was probably the *archineōkoros* Lucius Claudius Severinus involved in the construction of an aqueduct at Aizanoi.⁸⁰ The semblance of roof, acroteria, and pediments supported by freestanding spirally-fluted columns, one at each corner, and the tetrastyle façade on the short left side give the idea of a miniature temple; even the doorway has inclined jambs, heavy upper mouldings and consoles like temple doors in the Roman East.⁸¹ On the short left side, the 'temple' front, two winged Cupid sentries on pedestals seem to sleep between the columns, their heads drooping beside the capitals, their feet grazing the lower shaft. Even on the other sides, depicting an Amazonomachy, the human-column analogy is not absent. Beside the left-hand column of the front is the helmeted female mannequin of a trophy whose head matches the capital in size and proportions; her face is aligned with the lower acanthus leaves, the helmet with the florid volutes above.

Waelkens's re-dating of several early column sarcophagi shows that, rather than being an evolutionary precursor of later forms as Wiegartz argued, the so-called 'Torre Nova group' must have developed more or less contemporaneously with fully colonnaded or arcaded examples and frieze sarcophagi like the one in Providence. At least as early as Afyon A, a sarcophagus in the British Museum also showing the Labours of Hercules innovatively reshapes the conventional temple image (Figure 12.4).⁸² The agile representations of the hero are set in a colonnade of spirally-fluted columns, the entablature alternately projecting and receding; and with a composite form of capital consisting of a row of stylised, lotus-like leaves below volutes of almost equal height. This arrangement of alternately concave and convex pedestals, corresponding to the ressauts of the entablature, seems to correct the less organised setting of almost identical figures in an almost fully preserved example from the east necropolis at Perge; here the lid presents the pitched, tiled roof of a temple, complete with acroteria and lion's head water-spouts.⁸³ The short side shows the door flanked by Attis figures on pedestals in Phrygian caps like support figures, and a medusa's head in the pediment above.⁸⁴ In Afyon B, a slightly later example using the same structure to show the Labours, the figures' heads cross the entablature mouldings, indicating the superhuman scale of Hercules and his feats; the entablature

79 Türkütüzün 1993, especially 519–525, figs. 3–8.

80 Levick 1988, no. 10. This project, which Severinus either oversaw (restoring ἐργεπιστὰ-τῆσαντος) or (partly) financed, may have included the restoration of a bath-gymnasium, as Mitchell 1993, i, 214 n. 112.

81 Famously at Baalbek, but also, more locally, the Temple of Zeus at Aizanoi.

82 BM Sculpture 2301, dated before 150; Waelkens 1982, 71.

83 Antalya, Archaeological Museum, inv. 1004. Wiegartz 1965, 147 (Antalya M), pl. 28a; Özoral 1977, figs. 1, 13; Waelkens 1982, 71. Length 2.50 m.

84 For the 'support figures', compare the 'Tower of the Scipios', above.

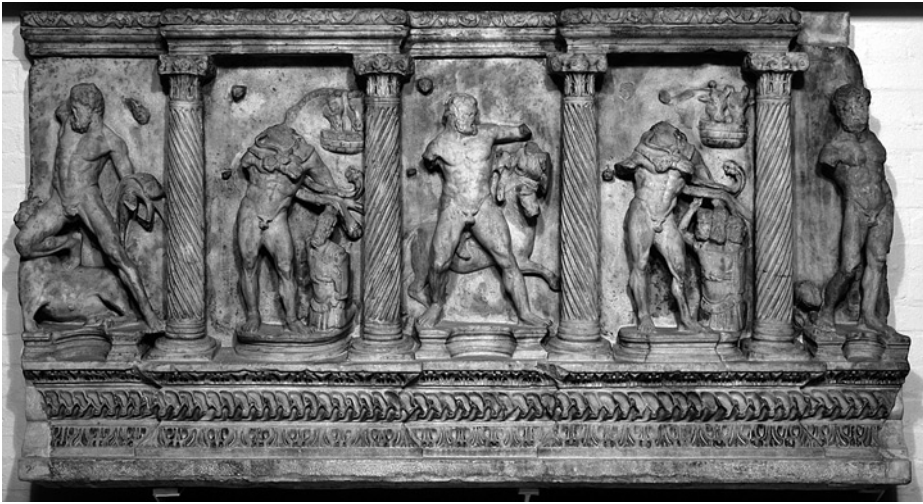


Figure 12.4: London B, fragment of the front face of a sarcophagus. British Museum, London, Sculpture 2301. Photograph: © The Trustees of the British Museum

breaks into an arch to enclose the hero's head.⁸⁵ Combining columns with heroic statuary, this architecture of *ressauts* borrows from the architecture of civic display to heighten the emotionality of the funerary idea. On Rome G (*c.* 160) a static set of Hercules figures is juxtaposed with dancing Bacchantes and other Dionysiac figures. These staccato rhythms of entablature alternately forward and back, with spirally-fluted columns on pedestals, provided a 'baroque' effect derived from Trajanic and Hadrianic public buildings like the Library of Celsus and the Agora Gate at Miletus.⁸⁶

The appearance on so many early column sarcophagi of Hercules is owed to the hero's suitability as a symbol of physical strength. Progenitor of the first columnar order (of the Dorian *Heracleidae*), he was also portrayed in columnar surrounds.⁸⁷ In the Antonine era these columnar frames acquired spiral flutes like those on the sarcophagi.⁸⁸ But Hercules also exemplified the principle of architectural support himself, having reputedly shouldered the heavens in his final labour like Atlas, as established in mythology and visualised in the famous

85 Buckler et al. 1933, no. 363 pl. 71; Wiegartz 1965, 143; Waelkens 1982, 74 no. 23, dating to *c.* 165; Apameia-Dinar in Lawrence 1951, 153 f., fig. 42.

86 Rome, Palazzo Mattei. Lawrence 1951, 154 f., fig. 43 ('Rome N'); Waelkens 1982, 73 no. 12. Sagalassus, theatre: Vandeput 1997, 107–112, pl. 59 (*c.* 180–200, or possibly earlier due to contrast with early Severan ornament). Miletus: Stročka 1981; Alföldy 1998.

87 Rykwert 1996, 143. Boardman 1990, 801 f. nos. 1368–1380.

88 Chapot 1907, 75 and 113 n. 3, citing Reinach 1904, 22 no. 143, from the Balkans; cf. also a Hercules sarcophagus from Apameia-Dinar: Lawrence 1951, 153 f., fig. 42.

metope at Olympia, a landmark of Antonine taste.⁸⁹ The story is not shown on sarcophagi, but, in a Roman twist, a sarcophagus from the colony of Pisidian Antioch shows Aeneas bearing Anchises extending up to the upper cornice.⁹⁰

The connection between Hercules and spirally-fluted columns is drawn out on an inventive little monument on the high plain 18 km north-west of Antalya, which forms a built complement to the micro-architecture of sarcophagi. Some ninety years ago remains were recorded at this site near the Selçuk monument of Evdir Han once identified with Lagon/Lagbe in Pamphylia.⁹¹ Still unexcavated, its Roman phases are poorly known; but it has the appearance of a sacred site, crossed by canals lined on both sides with richly decorated porticoes and altars.⁹² Near the centre were observed the remnants of a small prostyle tetrastyle temple. Its façade was reconstructed with an arched lintel and four spirally-fluted columns on pedestals carved with scenes from the Herculean Labours.⁹³

Following the re-location of Lagon elsewhere, this site is now believed to be the bishopric Eudokias settled by the Termessians in the later Roman period.⁹⁴ Interestingly, the central opening of the scene building at Termessus is also framed by two spirally-fluted columns.⁹⁵ In the central bay of the scene building at Suessa Aurunca, two similar columns of *giallo antico*, flanked by vertically fluted columns of *pavonazzetto*, framed a baroque statue of the benefactress Matidia Minor as Aura in grey-black Göktepe marble.⁹⁶ In earlier Italian designs spirally-fluted columns added a theatrical or 'Egyptian' quality to micro-architecture and larger buildings.⁹⁷ But in the Antonine age they came into their

89 Apollodoros 2.5.11; Boardman *et al.* 1990, nos. 2685, 2687 (S. Italian vases, mid-5th century and c. 380 B.C.) and 2767 (intaglio). Olympia, Temple of Zeus, Metope 10: Ashmole and Yalouris 1967, pl. 88; Boardman *et al.* 1990, no. 2683. For the importance of Olympia and its sculptures for Pausanias, see de Angelis 1991–92, 106, 252 f.

90 Ankara D (c. 160): Lawrence 1951, 152 f., fig. 41. Cf. contemporary coins: Mattingly 1940, iv.36, no. 237, pl. 6.5 (gold); 203 no. 1264; 207 no. 1292, pl. 30.5 (bronzes).

91 Moretti 1921, following the former identification by Spratt and Forbes 1847, I.2, 228 with the δῆμος Λαγβέων attested on an inscription (Ramsay 1888, 16 gives the ancient name as Lagbon). This location persists in archaeological literature (Benson 1959, 260; Webb 1996, 17). For correct identification, see below.

92 Stillwell 1976, s.v. 'Lagon (Evdir Han)' (U. Serdaroglu).

93 Moretti 1921, 140.

94 French 1994, 87.

95 Lánckoronski 1890–92, ii, 95 fig. 53, 97 fig. 55, pl. XI; Chapot 1907, 124 f., fig. 155.

96 For the rebuilding after 138: Chausson 2008; the central bay of the second storey is dated by its Proconnesian capitals to the Antonine period: Cascella 2002.

97 Micro-architecture: Apulian vase painting: Romanelli 1928, IVD r, pl. 8: 2, 3, 5; Campanian wall-painting: Schefold 1952, 176, pl. 37; Campana plaques: Rome, MNR (Kranz 1978, pl. 161.2), and the similar BM Terracotta D 633 (GR 1805.7–3.317). Larger-scale: Verona, Arch of the Gavii and 'Porta dei Borsari': Blake 1959, 74, 143 f. (with first-century date, but others call the latter Hadrianic, and its rebuilding



Figure 12.5: Columns of the Cardo Maximus, Apamea.
Photograph: M. Disdero, February 2005.

own: adorning scene buildings;⁹⁸ demarcating temple gateways;⁹⁹ framing divine images on eastern coins of the second and third centuries; and, complete with bronze statues of the Antonine emperors on brackets protruding from some column shafts, characterising an entire stretch of the colonnaded Cardo Maximus at Apamea (Figure 12.5) opposite the entrance to the Antonine agora and the Tycheion building, with one or more Atlas figures crouching on its podium.¹⁰⁰

An extreme and highly original attempt to associate Hercules with the concept of architectural support, also using spirally-fluted columns, is the remarkable Velletri sarcophagus (Figures 12.6 and 12.7), which is now thought

inscription is of 265); Florence, sanctuary of Isis: Banchelli 2009; Tivoli, Hadrian's Villa, 'Antinoeion': Mari and Sgambaro 2007, 86 f., fig. 13 (also in *giallo antico*); and generally: Fano Santi 1993.

98 Fragments from the Theatre and the Odeion of Herodes Atticus at Athens: Benson 1959, 260, 264 f. (Athens M1–2, Athens K); and from the theatres at Curium and Sabratha: Benson 1956, 386.

99 E.g. Athens, Olympieion; Aphrodisias, Temple of Aphrodite.

100 Chapot 1907, figs. 129–149; Balty 1981, 64–75.

to have been made not in the late Antonine age as first thought, but in the 150 s, the experimental phase of the earliest Asiatic column sarcophagi, if not earlier.¹⁰¹ The contemporary architectural context of Rome and Greece helps to understand both the choice of themes and the work's extraordinary construction.¹⁰² Some details reflect a theatre context: the snake-foot giant in the central tympanon of the left side (Figure 12.6) recalls a frieze of Pentelic marble from the theatre at Catania.¹⁰³ The bases of the spirally-fluted columns recall ancient Ionic tradition; the Ionic capitals, differing from the Corinthian or composite capitals of column sarcophagi, recall the 'Mourning Women' Sarcophagus; the palmettes echo classical Attic stelae. If these elements hail from the work's Attic style, the sarcophagus also shows Roman influence. The garlands extended along the roof by Cupids point to a Roman funerary tradition visible on the sarcophagus of Celsus and another at Corinth.¹⁰⁴ The profile and decoration of base and lid, with a succession of anthemion, Ionic cyma, and dentils, look distinctively 'Roman'; the victories killing bulls and lions attacking bulls which appear in the left side pediment and as acroteria of two of the aedicules of the front, are paralleled on two garland sarcophagi from the tomb of Herodes Atticus at Cephisia.¹⁰⁵ The elaborate raking cornices of the pediments are reminiscent of the terracotta ornament of temple-tombs in Antonine Rome; the cultivated use of support figures alludes to contemporary architectural fashion: caryatids at Hadrian's Villa and Herodes Atticus's Triopion; telamons from the second-century stage of the Theatre of Dionysus.¹⁰⁶ The bull's heads at the corners evoke earlier Roman architecture.¹⁰⁷ The ornament as a whole suggests that blend of neo-Attic style and urban

101 Bartoccini's date of *c.* 190–193 was lowered to *c.* 200 by Lawrence 1965, 222, but back-dated to *c.* 140 by Bernard Andreae (Andreae 1963, 25, and 2005, 32, figs.). Pensabene and Mesolella 2005, 67 suggest a date shortly after 150; Galli 2005, 76 assumes *c.* 150–175.

102 The Labours theme is depicted in reliefs from the theatre at Corinth, dated to the 2nd quarter of the second century: Sturgeon 1977, 95–114, pls. 67–83; cf. Sturgeon 2004. The idea may have been taken from the theatre at Delphi, where a late-Hellenistic frieze of the Labours was re-used in the late first century (Lévêque 1951, 247–263; Sturgeon 1978) or under Nero (Weir 1999). See also Sturgeon 2006.

103 Pensabene 1996–97, 63 fig. 51.

104 Koch and Sichtermann 1982, 227.

105 Pensabene and Mesolella 2005, 69.

106 Schmidt 1982, 99 f., 106 f., 123–127.

107 Telamons: Pensabene and Mesolella 2005, 65, cf. Pompeii, Forum Baths and Covered Theatre. Bull's heads: Pompeii, House of the Cryptoporticus, room 20 ('Diaeta'/ 'Southeast Triclinium'), S. wall, facing nude support figures: Maiuri 1933; Beyen 1938, 99–106, 432, figs. 33–36, 213b.

Roman taste which characterised the sacred landscape of Antonine rural estates.¹⁰⁸

What kind of building is envisioned here is much disputed. For some, it is the 'palace of Hades', as the central figures on the main long side and the multiple doors suggest; if so, it is also clear that this palace is a creation of stage architecture and almost a parody of grand works. For others, it is a heröon for the dead, in the manner of Asiatic column sarcophagi. But, unlike the latter, it is striking that only six of the structural elements are columns, none of them on the main face. The majority of the supports are human or animal figures. The crouching telamons on the lowest level stand not at the corners as on the podia of some column sarcophagi,¹⁰⁹ but centrally, four along each long side carrying the two aedicules and two at the middle of each short side; the bull's heads are enormous relative to the figures around them and structurally equivalent to the corner caryatids above. The main entablature, projecting forward and back, is carried by caryatids, apart from the columns carrying the corner aedicules and the door-frames at the centre of the sides. Even the divine figures in the pediments share in the metaphor. Centrally, above Hades and Persephone enthroned and highlighted by Hades' staff, Caelus spreads a canvas perfectly within a segmental pediment to signify the vault of heaven carried by Atlas, encapsulating its etymological associations and the symbolic links between the simulated theatre stage and the audience of family mourners encircling the work.¹¹⁰ On the lid, cupids carry garlands

The support metaphor recurs in the images between the supports across the sarcophagus's three storeys, which are thematically linked as often in Antonine art.¹¹¹ As on contemporary Asiatic sarcophagi, the back and sides of the central tier celebrate the Labours in a linear order reflecting the conventional narrative (Figure 12.7). The figures below highlight the final task, in which he supported the heavens: the Hesperides pick apples from their tree; beside them, Sisyphus shouldering a rock recalls Atlas with his burden; a column-like mast stands at the middle of Charon's ferry. The last, hopeless figures carry nothing: Tantalus, upright in a stream of water with open, empty palms; and the Danaids, failed water-carriers. The front face is unified by the central figures of Hades and Persephone. At the lowest level chariots show the story of Persephone; on the main level the enthroned pair are flanked by the mythic couples Protesilaus and Laodamia and Admetus and Alcestis, a chiastic structure playing on entry to and

108 For more on the Dionysiac landscape intimated here, especially the βουκόλοι, see Galli 2005, 81–90.

109 Compare also the sarcophagus in Palazzo Fiano, Rome: Wiegartz 1965, 179 no. 35, pl. 12a-b; Sapelli 1993; Bonanno Aravantinos 2005, 44 f. figs. 2–3.

110 For *cavus/caelum*, see Deschamps 1979; for *scaenalsphaera*, see Poulle 1999, 262.

111 Newby 2002, 131.



Figure 12.6: Velletri sarcophagus, left side. Museo Civico, Velletri.
 Photograph: DAIR 63.41.

departure from the hidden interior of the sarcophagus, which taunts viewers about their own relative position; the lowest register shows Minerva, Diana and Tellus, arching his cloak to form the vault of the chthonic cave beneath, and,

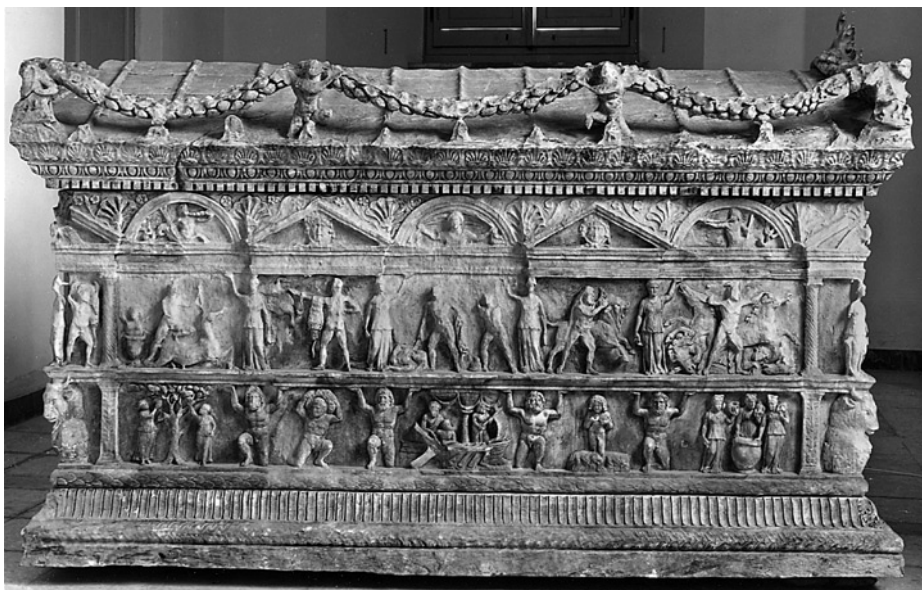


Figure 12.7: Velletri sarcophagus, rear side. Museo Civico, Velletri.
Photograph: DAI R 59.52.

above them, Jupiter and Neptune. Overall, the sarcophagus looks like a work of sculptural theatre composed to illustrate how in the *mimus vitae* the metaphor of architectural support was a vivid image of the human burden in life and death.¹¹²

The patron of this extraordinary object is a puzzle. It was found in the Contrada Arcione on a side street off the Via Ariana which runs along the south side of the Alban Hills, about four miles from Velletri, but it had evidently been removed by grave robbers from its original location and dropped in a vineyard. Nine skeletons were inside, seven adults and two children, and an instrument in the chest showed that it was broken into in the nineteenth century. However, the dating of seven of the skeletons to between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries suggests that the sarcophagus had already been pillaged and re-used then (raising intriguing questions about the continued efficacy of its symbolic language), so even the location from which it had been removed was perhaps only secondary.¹¹³ Nonetheless, as such a weighty object can hardly have travelled far from its original site, it is worth considering the ancient topography of the

112 For the *mimus vitae* (σκῆνη ὁ βίος), see Curtius 1953, 138–144; Andreae 1963, 75–79; Ewald 1999, 130.

113 Bartoccini, 129; Caldelli 2005, 109 n.2, citing Rubini 1989, 146. See also Bonanno Aravantinos 2005, 53.

neighbourhood.¹¹⁴ Of the many Roman villas around Velletri, the closest to the findspot of the sarcophagus is the villa of Fontana Sant'Antonio, about four kilometres east of Velletri.¹¹⁵ In 1872 three athletic statues of Pentelic marble, now in the Capitoline Museum, were found here amid substantial remains suggesting a 'sumptuous villa': ancient walls of *opus mixtum*; abundant architectural fragments, including coloured marbles; and a Hadrianic brick-stamp.¹¹⁶ The cultivated, Hellenising taste implied by such finds could also have produced the Velletri sarcophagus.

The telamons in the lowest register of the sarcophagus find a parallel in an example in the Villa Borghese (Rome A, c. 155–160) with an arcade of five arches supported at the corners by prisoner support figures.¹¹⁷ The arcade motif was applied to representations of Hercules during the same period and became more favoured than the horizontal entablature. The hero's significance as a symbol of strength for arcaded architecture is implied by the resolution of a building-workers' dispute over arcades and cross-vaults through 'supplication to Pallas Tritogeneia and strong Heracles'.¹¹⁸ Of seven other contemporary arcaded Asiatic sarcophagi, at least four also depicted Hercules.¹¹⁹ Typically, the arches are decorated with Lesbian cymatium, the columns spirally-fluted, and the spandrels filled with figures or heads.¹²⁰ On a reused fragment from Nicaea the figures of Hercules are also set on pedestals.¹²¹ This alternative structural arrangement is paralleled by the arcaded courts seen from that time in eastern cities.¹²² A fragment from Ephesus (c. 165) with a rosette in the spandrel between two arches mirrors the form of an arcade at the temple in Cyzicus drawn by Cyriac of Ancona.¹²³ The inner court of the temple at Aizanoi had a similar arcade.¹²⁴

114 Caldelli 2005, 113.

115 Ibid., 110.

116 Pelzer Wagener and Ashby 1913, 405–428.

117 Wiegartz 1965, 33, 168.

118 Buckler 1923, 34–36 (Miletus); see Thomas 2007a, 90.

119 Aydın (c. 155–160): Wiegartz 1965, pl. 32b; Rome M (Vatican, c. 160): Morey 1924, fig. 82; Denizli E (c. 160): Ferrari 1966, pl. 2.1; Iznik (n. 121 below). The subject matter of Üskübü A and Denizli D (both c. 155–160) is irrecoverable: Wiegartz 1965, pl. 33e. Only Antalya E (below) clearly shows a different scene.

120 Antalya V (c. 165–170): Wiegartz 1965, 148, pl. 30 f; Rome I (c. 170): ibid., 169 pl. 42c; Rome M (prev. note).

121 Iznik Museum, inv. 1755, c. 150–155; Fıratlı 1974, 919–920, pl. 329a; Waelkens 1982, 71 no. 3 (Iznik T).

122 Thomas 2007a, 40, 201 f., fig. 169.

123 Ephesus D: Wiegartz 1965, 155; Waelkens 1982, 75 no. 26. Cyzicus: Ashmole 1956, 185 f. pl. 36; Lyttelton 1974, pl. 178. For a reconstruction of this arcade, see the drawing by Anthony Smith in Thomas 2007a, 39 fig. 25.

124 Lyttelton 1974, 262.

Aedicular architecture: pediments, spirals, and shells

From about 160 a variant form was produced with a significant addition, the carving of a shell-niche behind each figure's head. Its first known occurrence is on a fragment from Termessus. An armed warrior with bowed head is shown below a shell-niche out of which appears a female head. This looks like Paris, favourite of Aphrodite, bowing out of his duel with Menelaus: hovering overhead is his protecting goddess, who 'caught up Paris easily, since she was divine, and wrapped him in a thick mist and set him down again in his own perfumed bedchamber'.¹²⁵ An obvious funerary symbolism can be inferred from the scene, whereby the soul of the deceased is rescued from death by divine aid and granted immortality in the afterlife represented by the funerary chamber. A similar sense may attach to the next surviving uses of the shell form on columnar sarcophagi, from Rome and Beirut.¹²⁶ In each case a young rider, nude but for a chlamys, is enshrined under the central shell-niche; the juxtaposition with the myth of Daedalus and Icarus in the better-preserved Beirut fragment (Figure 12.8) suggests that this commemorates the premature death of a young man or boy. Another fragment in Antalya applies the setting to the myth of Achilles, brought from Scyros and hastened towards mortality and celebrity.¹²⁷ In these three cases the sarcophagus takes a new aedicular form, with triangular pediment over the central niche, segmental ones over the lateral niches, and shells over all niches and intermediate intercolumniations. Such forms are used in earlier Roman funerary tradition to contribute to the suggestion of an after-life. On the urn of Lucius Volusius Diodorus (Figure 12.9) shell-niches and spirally-fluted columns frame the funerary bust; shells enclose the busts on the temple-tomb of the main relief of the Haterii while plants spiral around the columns; and on a smaller relief from the same tomb two shells hang poised over garlands above the lifeless body of the deceased.¹²⁸ In the tomb of Isidora at Tuna el-Gebel, necropolis of Hermopolis Magna, the back niche suggesting the funerary bed of the deceased is framed on either side by spirally-fluted columns and above by a large conch shell.¹²⁹ Inscriptions on the inner walls of the *prothuron*, declaring that the tomb belongs to a young girl apparently drowned in the river Nile, explain the significance of conch and columns: the former, an

125 *Iliad* 3.380–1, trans. Lattimore Antalya E, c. 160, Archaeological Museum, Antalya, inv. 310. Wiegartz 1965, 146 pl. 27a-b.

126 Rome E: Lawrence 1951, 143–145 fig. 31; Wiegartz 1965, 169. Beirut A: Lawrence 1951, 134 f. fig. 19; Wiegartz 1965, 152 f.; Strocka 1984, 208–211 fig. 11.

127 Antalya K: Wiegartz 1965, 146, pl. 27d, reinterpreted by Strocka 1984, 218–220.

128 Ash urns: Koch and Sichtermann 1982, pl. 39. Haterii relief: Sinn and Freyberger 1996, 51–9, no. 6, pl. II and 136 fig. 6.

129 Graindor 1932, 98, pl. II: dated by a preponderance of coinage to the late Hadrianic or Antonine period.



Figure 12.8: Fragment of sarcophagus from Beirut. Beirut Museum.
Photograph: Foto Oehler.

icon of the river bed, forms a 'grotto' with the columns on either side and a 'columnless' inner curved recess, symbolically painted with stars like a heaven.¹³⁰ This heavenly grotto is supported by the nymph, again highlighting the importance of this metaphor in the iconography of the Roman dead. The explicit text helps to understand the meaning of the combination of spirally-fluted columns and shell-niche around a funerary image, both for the micro-architecture of column sarcophagi and for some tomb interiors.¹³¹ These forms were seen as securing the afterlife of the heroised deceased.

The three sarcophagus fragments above represent experimental versions of a new archetype, which became established by about 170, after which the arcade type virtually disappeared from the Docimian output until a late revival in the final years of the workshop.¹³² This new scheme, Morey's 'principal type', which

¹³⁰ Ibid., 101–8, text I.

¹³¹ E.g. Vatican Necropolis, Tomb I ('Tomb of the Quadriga'), early 3rd century: Toynbee and Ward-Perkins 1956, 78, pl. 5.

¹³² A single, later example is Hierapolis E, c. 180–185: Ferrari 1966, pls. 11.1, 11.3. At Aphrodisias the arcade continued longer. The two arcaded examples surviving from the variant Iznik Group (Iznik R, c. 170–175; Iznik K, c. 250) belong to the workshop's first phase or final years, mirroring Docimian practice: Wiegartz 1965, 161 f.



Figure 12.9: Cinerary urn for Lucius Volusius Diodorus. Vatican Museums, Rome, 9813/14. Photograph: Forschungsarchiv für Römische Plastik, Cologne.

had shells in the pedimented niches, but omitted them from the intermediate intercolumniations, dominated column sarcophagi produced in Docimium for

ninety years.¹³³ In its figured decoration, it is striking for including apparently historical images of the deceased alongside mythological and divine or semi-divine figures. In its 'micro-architecture' it is also innovative. The lid no longer presents a temple roof, but reclining figures in Etruscan manner, and this style of lid was now also applied to arcaded sarcophagi.¹³⁴ There was now no longer a desire to make sarcophagi appear as miniature temples in the older Attic and Asiatic manner. The sides evoke the aedicular architecture of contemporary public buildings. The period when column sarcophagi emerged as a major event in Asiatic sculpture was also the highpoint of aedicular architecture, when the theatrical mode of presenting statues in pedimented columnar niches, projecting from a continuous wall, was applied to public buildings.¹³⁵ In column displays on fountains, baths, libraries and bouleuteria in the Roman East imperial, civic and mythological statues, framed between columns, overlooked the activities of the community.¹³⁶ Some statue niches had shell forms too, as in the propylon near the agora at Cremna (c. 150) and in 'Building M' at Side, where a statue of Nemesis was enshrined in a corner niche with a shell in the semi-dome between freestanding columns.¹³⁷

In the first surviving complete Asiatic column sarcophagus of aedicular form, the spectacular instance from Rapolla (c. 170), the figures are elegantly fitted into the micro-architecture.¹³⁸ The long sides (Figures 12.10 and 12.11) are each formed by three pedimented shell-niches: a central one with triangular gable within an outer concave niche, suggested by the curved, receding entablature in which the figures stand on either side, and two with segmental pediments. The short sides have a single niche with triangular pediment contained within a concave niche. The whole arrangement can be understood when 'folded out' to show one short side between two long sides as a continuous façade.¹³⁹ This schema mirrors the first storey of the scene building at Aizanoi (Figures 12.12 and ■12.3 ■??12.13??■), where projecting columnar bays are

133 Morey 1924, 29. This is what Wiegartz and Waelkens call the 'geläufiger Typ'.

134 E.g. Rome K (Torlonia, c. 170), also with forward and backward projections of the podium: Morey 1924, 47–48, figs. 83–84; Waelkens 1982, 76 no. 35; and the fully preserved Perge A (dated before 170 by Wiegartz 1965, 167, but neither the sarcophagus nor the photos of it in Lańckoronski's collection in Vienna can now be traced).

135 MacDonald 1986, 183–203; Burrell 2006.

136 Fountains: Dorl-Klingenschmid 2001; bath-gymnasia and libraries: Burrell 2006, 437, 455–457; bouleuteria: Balty 1991.

137 Cremna: Vandeput 1997, 78 pl. 93.1. Side: Mansel 1956, 59–62, fig. 21; Mansel 1978, 169–186; cf. Vandeput 1997, pl. 117.1.

138 Wiegartz 1965, 164 f. and especially Ghiandoni 1995, with bibliography.

139 Kranz 1978, 375 f. uses the same technique to compare funerary altars and cinerary urns with western aedicular sarcophagi.

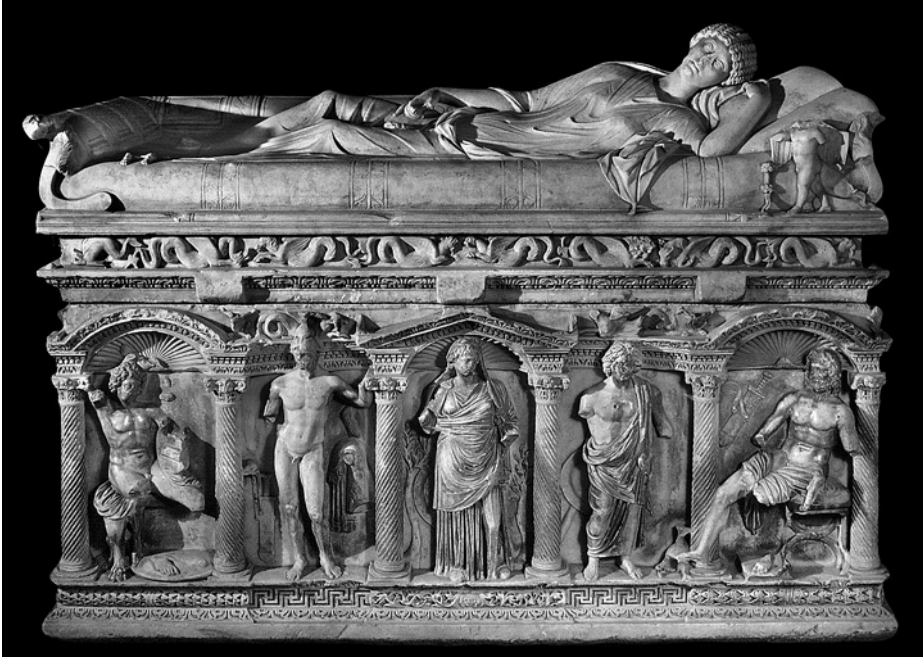


Figure 12.10: Sarcophagus from Rapolla. Castello di Melfi. Original reverse face, presented as the front face in modern display, following incorrect orientation of the lid. Photograph: Nicola Figluolo, courtesy of the Archivio Fotografico della Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici della Basilicata, Potenza, Italy.

also combined with a broad curved niche of 'western' type.¹⁴⁰ However, the design on the sarcophagus is more dynamic than the built versions, because the niches have pediments, shell forms and spirally-fluted columns, whereas in the theatre such columns are restricted to the central pair of the second storey, and on all faces they are enclosed by concave forms.

Seen in this way, the two short sides become the focus: originally below the feet of the reclining effigy was the niche containing the door of the tomb, with the deceased, in characteristic 'Hygieia' mode of Roman aristocratic ladies, guided inside by Hermes Psychopompos; below her head, the exemplar Helen. The side facing the ancient viewer showed Aphrodite at the centre, the Roman Venus Victrix in the familiar 'Capua' type extending her shield in victory and

¹⁴⁰ Shapley 1923, 73, regarding the Borghese-Louvre muse sarcophagus; cf. Morey 1921, pl. XV.6; Morey 1924, 92; Waelkens 1982, 123; Sear 2006, 113. The first storey of the scene building is dated by architectural ornament to the Hadrianic period, the second and third storeys to a few decades later, when the stadium-theatre complex was remodelled: Hoffmann *et al.* 1993, 455–460; Jes 2007, 163; Rohn 2008, 204. The scene building at Sagalassus is similar in form.



Figure 12.11: Sarcophagus from Rapolla. Castello di Melfi. Original front face.

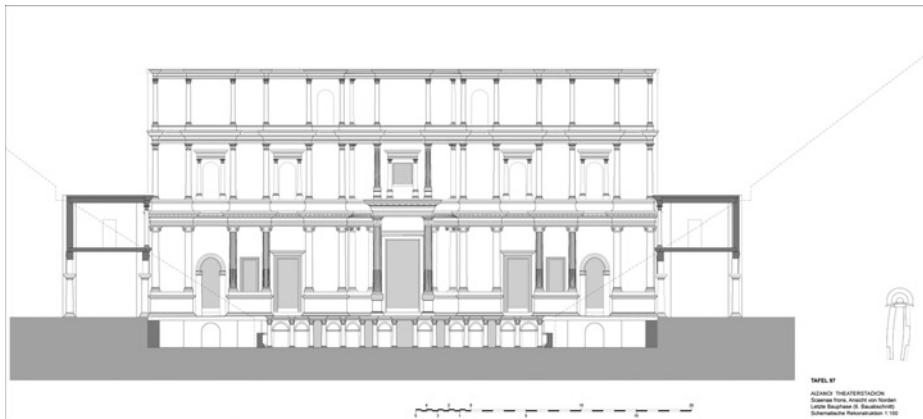


Figure 12.12: Theatre at Aizanoi, scene building. Restored elevation by Corinna Rohn.

flanked by the legendary couples Achilles and Briseis and Meleager and Atalanta, *exempla* of female power over men.¹⁴¹ Conches shroud the three

¹⁴¹ Ghiandoni 1995, 5 f., fig. 1; cf. Pera 1971–74. Meleager's wife Cleopatra would fit

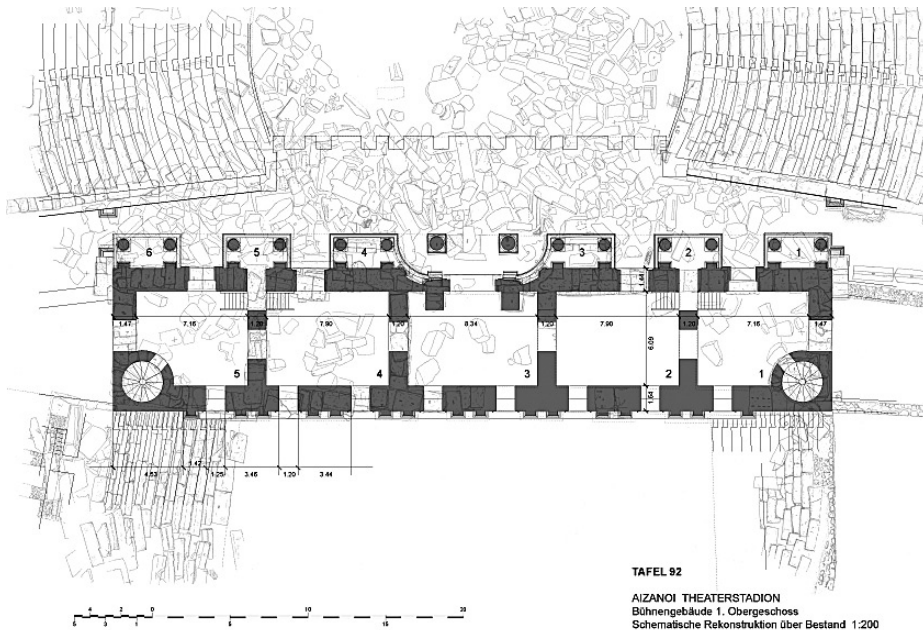


Figure 12.13: Theatre at Aizanoi, scene building. Restored plan of the first storey by Corinna Rohn.

central females Venus, Thetis and Helen, the door, and the seated figures on the long sides: on the front, Briseis and, in a chiastic arrangement like the Velletri sarcophagus, not the huntress Atalanta, but Meleager, whom she beat to the boar; on the rear, sitting languorously, the *nemeseis* of Achilles, Apollo and Agamemnon. Unlike the earliest fragments of aedicular type, there is no shell hood for the intermediate, 'masculine' figures – Achilles (to the left of both Venus and Thetis), the 'ephebe' Hephaestus, and Atalanta – or the statuesque figures of Odysseus and Diomedes on the short right side.¹⁴² All figures in shell-niches are comfortably enshrined by the conch; those in the intermediate intercolumniations reach the top of the entablature to maintain harmony with the central figures; only the helmet of superhuman Achilles exceeds this. The form of the figures also echoes public architecture. Although only Odysseus and Diomedes are presented as statues on pedestals, many other figures resemble types used for contemporary statuary. Some mirror statues found in public

better a theme of conjugal love and is so used by Briseis herself in Ovid, *Heroides* 3.92; but iconography and dress point to Atalanta.

142 Cf. also sarcophagi at Myra and Iznik; for the common Hermes type cf. Izmir, Rome K, Afyon A.

buildings;¹⁴³ others are known from coins and medals, or reliefs;¹⁴⁴ and others lacking formal parallels appear on other column sarcophagi, so may have been modelled on contemporary statue types now lost.¹⁴⁵ Significant hand and foot gestures integrate these figures into the surrounding aedicular architecture, reinforcing the links between human bodies and adjacent columns.¹⁴⁶

Architecture and figures here show the fusion of Greek and Roman culture in the Antonine age. The sarcophagus was placed in a relatively modest tomb of the temple type common in the suburban streets of Rome.¹⁴⁷ It was situated in Lucania, off the Via Appia, midway between Rome and Brindisi and a strategic site on the route between Rome and Greece despite its apparent remoteness; this fertile hinterland of Venusia saw the villas of a prosperous, urban ruling class into the third century.¹⁴⁸ It would not be surprising if the influential Lucanian family of the Bruttii was linked with this costly and portentous work of art. As proconsul of Asia the younger Gaius Bruttius Praesens (cos. 150 and 180) might have seen products of the Docimian workshop.¹⁴⁹ Tantalisingly, an undated Publius Aelius Bruttius Lucianus, could, as proconsul of Lycia and Pamphylia, have known experimental forms of aedicular sarcophagi such as the one in Antalya which might have inspired that at Melfi.¹⁵⁰

The principal type lasted to the end of the Docimian workshops in the mid-third century. Early examples show sensitivity to the harmony between columns and human figures. In an instance in the Vatican (c. 175) an arch under the pediment forms a crown for the figure's head reminiscent of the arched lintel in contemporary buildings; individual elements of the Corinthian capitals are clearly articulated.¹⁵¹ In the Colonna sarcophagus (c. 180) figures fill the niches

143 E.g. Venus (Capua, amphitheatre, and Ephesus, Vedius gymnasium); Thetis (Ephesus, Library of Celsus, 'Episteme'): Ghiandoni 1995, 20 f., 26.

144 Coins (Venus, Atalanta): Ghiandoni 1995, 21. Reliefs (Achilles, Apollo, Vulcan, Helen): *ibid.*, 19 f., 24, 26, 31 f.

145 E.g. Meleager: cf. Ostia C (c. 165): Wiegartz 1965, pl. 40c.

146 E.g. Achilles (rear), extending left arm towards adjacent capital; Agamemnon, right foot on adjacent column base 'in an unnatural manner' (Ghiandoni 1995, 27); Diomedes, right hand on column.

147 Ghiandoni 1995, 5 fig. 6 (8 m. square).

148 Klein-Andreau 1976, 35; Gualandi *et al.* 1981, 163. E.g. the villa at the Contrada Tesoro: Klein-Andreau 1980; and that at Atella: Simpson 1982. See, in general, Small 1994, esp. 40.

149 Groag and Stein 1933, I, 370 no. 164; Rémy 2005, 119; Raepsaet-Charlier 1987, 150; Ghiandoni 1995, 47 f. For costs of such column sarcophagi, see Wiegartz 1974, 365 n. 47.

150 Paris and Radet 1885, 436 no. II. (One wonders whether the fourth name ΛΟΥΚΙΑΝΟΝ was a mistake on the stone for ΛΟΥΚΑΝΙΟΝ, 'Lucanian'). Antalya K: Wiegartz 1965, pl. 27d; Waelkens 1982, 74 no. 21.

151 Rome L: Morey 1924, fig. 37; Waelkens 1982, 78 no. 50.

with their heads under the conches, and a shell is added over the tomb door.¹⁵² In a fragment from Nicaea (c. 180–185), a figure stands with his feet at the base of the adjacent columns and his head in the arched conch niche; his left hand rests against the upper column shaft, and his right hand touches the capital.¹⁵³

From the last decade of the second century, however, the architectural ornament was increasingly schematic. This led Morey, incorrectly, to distinguish a later 'Sidamara' school from earlier 'Lydian' versions.¹⁵⁴ Yet the lack of attention to ornament only highlights the overall architectural scheme, its relation to a monumental archetype and its continuing symbolic significance. In the Severan period the aedicular model of column sarcophagi remained paramount; its most iconic features, the shell-niches and spirally-fluted columns, were indispensable. These forms were echoed in contemporary monumental buildings. At Hierapolis, not far from Docimium, the lower proscenium wall of the Severan scene building strikingly resembles contemporary column sarcophagi: an alternately projecting and receding entablature; spirally-fluted columns with composite capitals; and ornate conch forms in the semicircular niches. The alternately rectilinear and round-headed niches almost certainly contained statues in antiquity.¹⁵⁵ Similar designs also influenced new architecture beyond theatres. At Ephesus spirally-fluted columns flanked the stairway to the Harbour Baths from the third-century atrium.¹⁵⁶ The aedicular façade continued as the prime focus of architectural display. It occurs in the Marble Court at Sardis, an *aleipterion* ('anointing place') dedicated in 211 to Caracalla and Geta, and probably characterised similar structures with statues as at nearby Daldis.¹⁵⁷ The prestige of this archetype was a sufficient motive for the principal type to outlive other forms of Docimian column sarcophagi.

The repeated use of a set repertoire of figure types shows that aedicular architecture became a recognised frame for presenting the deceased in their social context.¹⁵⁸ The form became a natural medium for allegorical images of a cultivated élite linked to circles of Roman power. On the end of the sarcophagus of Claudia Antonia Sabina (Istanbul G, c. 190), replacing earlier mythological figures, a standing, bearded man holds a scroll; on the front, a standing man and seated, veiled woman are under the lateral segmental pediments.¹⁵⁹ Yet now there was a move away from the formerly close, proportionate relationship between figure and column. By contrast with Melfi, the heads of the figures on

152 Rome D: Morey 1924, fig. 55; Waelkens 1982, 80 no. 61.

153 Iznik A: Morey 1924, fig. 34; Waelkens 1982, 80 no. 65.

154 Morey 1924, 82–84; Wiegartz 1965, 30.

155 *Hierapolis di Frigia* (1987), 38–48; Sear 2006, 338 f., with further literature.

156 Chapot 1907, 125 (there called the *Thermae Constantinianae*).

157 Yegül 1986; Burrell 2006, 460.

158 Wiegartz 1965, 81–118.

159 Morey 1924, figs. 12–14; Wiegartz 1965, 158.

the front are not enclosed within the arching shell-niches, but break through the upper mouldings. On a corner fragment from Izmit-Nicomedia (*c.* 195) a half-nude figure leans out from the arched niche; his feet stretch to the foot of the column pedestals, no longer the column base.¹⁶⁰ On a well-preserved sarcophagus from Perge (*c.* 210), the seated figures under the side aedicules no longer show an equivalent proportion between column and figure. Whereas on the rear of the Melfi sarcophagus, despite the seated posture, the heads remain close to the capitals and the feet beside the bases, here the heads touch the upper rim of the segmental pediments and the feet stretch well into the adjacent niche.¹⁶¹

As marble sarcophagi became more widespread in the third century, the Docimian aedicular form helped to distinguish the highest ranks of society. An instance from Laodicea has the name of the asiarch Euethios Pyrrhon inscribed under the couch lid.¹⁶² In front of, rather than within, the central aedicule is a seated, bearded man, flanked by two women, one veiled, one not; on the outside, under the segmental pediments, two young male figures, one in tunic armed with a shield, the other nude apart from a clamys around his neck. The spirally-fluted columns rest on bulky pedestals that seem designed to create space for the figures rather than as harmonious extensions of the column. But if the micro-architecture no longer provided a proportionate setting, it still communicated an iconic language related to larger civic projects. The deceased presumably held his office after Caracalla's visit in 214/15, when the emperor restored the city's neocorate which it had previously lost. This visit was the occasion for the inauguration of a new era as a marker of local identity, celebrated perhaps by a new monumental fountain whose aedicular statue niches echoed the forms of Euethios's sarcophagus.¹⁶³ As the aedicular idiom of the nymphaeum was grounded in a cultural dialect common to cities of Asia Minor which expressed their adherence to an imperial ideology, so the asiarch's use of the same exemplar of classical style in his sarcophagus expressed both his civic authority and imperial rank.

From the later Severan period, the architectural ornament of such sarcophagi became increasingly stylised. On a fragment from Mersin-Zephyrion in Cilicia (*c.* 225), the dart of the egg-and-dart is replaced by simple foliage.¹⁶⁴ In the 230 s such aedicular architecture was mere background, the column little

160 Istanbul C (Istanbul Archaeological Museum, inv. 1886): Morey 1924, fig. 32; Waelkens 1982, 83 no. 81.

161 Antalya, Archaeological Museum, inv. 1005 (Antalya N): Wiegartz 1965, 147, pl. 29b; Waelkens 1982, 82 no. 80 (dating to *c.* 190–195, from bearded heads in manner of Marcus Aurelius); redated by Strocka 1971, 71 no. 6 because of Philisca's bun.

162 Hierapolis Museum, inv. 6527. Şimşek 1997.

163 Howgego 2005, 10; Des Gagniers 1969, 125 fig. 46 (Stage 1).

164 Adana A: Wiegartz 1965, pl. 24.

more than a colonnette.¹⁶⁵ This lack of attention to the role played by columnar architecture reflected macro-architectural realities in Asia Minor. By then there were few new projects of aedicular architecture, little further work on scene buildings, and many theatres were converted for gladiatorial shows or water spectacles.¹⁶⁶ The symbolic language expressed in the micro-architecture of sarcophagi was almost obsolete. Such changes, however, did not result from shortages in supply of building materials, but should be linked with behavioural changes in élite self-representation. The erosion of the column sarcophagus as a medium of display in the Roman East was part of a larger shift from grand building towards ostentation in costume and shows.¹⁶⁷

The lavish sarcophagi produced in the twilight of the Docimian workshops show that such a setting was still, in miniature, considered capable of conveying the educated values of late Severan society. An intellectual occupies the place of honour at the centre of the front of the sarcophagus from Selifkeh-Seleucia; at the corners, the Dioscuri are arranged symmetrically in western style; and a mounted hunter fills the niche of one short side.¹⁶⁸ However, all equivalence between figures and surrounding columns was lost. In the central aedicule on the front of a sarcophagus from Konya, the conch covers the figure's shoulders, rather than his head; the latter reaches the sima of the pediment above, and the women's clothes extend to the base of the column pedestals.¹⁶⁹ It seems that now eastern élites no longer understood aedicular architecture as directly correlated to human representation. A late work from near Nicaea follows the standard aedicular type on three sides, but its right short side presents three shell-niches, as if of an arcade, but without the central columns, which are replaced by a hunting scene; many architectural details are lightly worked, suggesting that the figures were produced first and the architecture added later was of secondary importance.¹⁷⁰ In the final decade of production at Docimium the arcade experienced a brief revival.¹⁷¹ It occurs again on a right side of the Sidamara sarcophagus (*c.* 250–260), masked by figures; this scene is the focus of the column-less front side, and the aedicular architecture is shown only on the rear, on which the reclining images of the deceased turn their backs and where the

165 E.g. London C (BM, *c.* 230–235), from Rome, showing a seated, bearded poet and a Muse, Thalia, with comic theatre mask: Morey 1924, fig. 52; Waelkens 1982, 90 no. 132.

166 Sear 2006, 44, 112.

167 Borg and Witschel 2001, 90–116.

168 Istanbul A, inv. 466, *c.* 230–235, Morey 1924, 39 f. figs. 61–64; cf. also the similar, fully preserved, but damaged Afyon K from Şuhut-Synnada: Waelkens 1982, 90 no. 133.

169 Konya A (old inv. 28–29/30/32), *c.* 245, Morey 1924, 33 f. figs. 36–37.

170 Istanbul I (inv. 5123), *c.* 245; Özgan 2004, 550 f., fig. 3.

171 Wiegartz 1965, 48 (from *c.* 245).

central seated figure, raised on a huge pedestal, dominates the columnar architecture. The figures dominate, the columns are understated background. In comparison with the Melfi sarcophagus, and even that from Sardis, architecture now played a drastically reduced role in the semiotics of display.

The aedicular form continued to be made in Docimian workshops until the early 260 s, when an ornate example was displayed in Antioch, rediscovered in 1993 with contents of gold jewellery and coins helping to establish the date.¹⁷² The elongated figures and heavily drilled, leaf-like architectural ornament exceed even the Sidamara example. To the same era belongs a temple-like sarcophagus found in Konya. A comparison has been observed between the two sarcophagi because of their similar 'Lycian motif' of seated corner figures, and it was concluded that the Konya example reflected evidence of economic and artistic decline corroborating Rodenwaldt's claim that 'the last decades of the third century meant the dissolution of antiquity and beginning of late antiquity.'¹⁷³ Yet, with its pitched, tiled roof and medusa's head, now not in the tympanon, but in enlarged scale on the side face below, and with the ornate calligraphy of its inscription which alone occupies the void between the seated figures, the Konya sarcophagus lacks neither expense nor artistic ambition. It shows, rather, a return to the earlier tradition of temple-like sarcophagi, now freed of the outmoded and short-lived fashion of aedicular architecture; together the human figure and written word present a new, non-columnar mode of representation.¹⁷⁴ In other workshops, however, and in larger architecture the spirally-fluted columns explored in the creative micro-architectural designs of column sarcophagi were by the late Empire almost 'the obligatory frame for any niche where a notable person is represented.'¹⁷⁵

The triumph of the arcade

When the quarries of Docimium ceased to export marble sarcophagi, its artists went elsewhere to ply their trade.¹⁷⁶ The Berlin piece with Christ and apostles (Figure 12.2), which brought column sarcophagi so much attention, was a result of this migration, as too was the Mattei Muse sarcophagus, adorned on three

172 Özgan 2000, 365–376, fig. 1; Ögüş 2004.

173 Özgan 2000, 387; Rodenwaldt 1936, 83.

174 Framing by seated figures is already well-attested in western sarcophagi, e.g. the chest of Sosia Iuliana at Ravenna, but within a columnar setting (Museo Nazionale, large cloister: Gabelmann 1973, 220, pls. 50–51; *ASR* VIII, 2, A 35 pls. 14.2–4, 15.1–4, 16.1), perhaps second century.

175 Chapot 1907, 113.

176 Wiegartz et al. 1971, 98–100; Waelkens 1982, 70.



Figure 12.14: The Mattei muse sarcophagus, *c.* 280–290. Museo Nazionale Romano 80711, Rome. Photograph: DAIR IN 6535.

sides with arcades with shell-niches.¹⁷⁷ Here muses hold masks paronomastically over the two central capitals (Figure 12.14).

The market in Italy for aedicular style at its height is attested not only by the many Asiatic sarcophagi found there, but also by one in Florence, a direct imitation presumably commissioned by an Italian patron.¹⁷⁸ But the latter's roof-like lid and garlanded intercolumniations suggest a poor understanding of the semiotics of the Asiatic model. Such works were a rarefied taste, intended perhaps, like the aedicular façades of Severan Rome, as a sign of accentuated Hellenism or regional identity.¹⁷⁹ More popular was the 'Lanuvium type' scheme developed in Severan Rome and imitated elsewhere, with a pediment between two arches, derived from earlier cinerary traditions.¹⁸⁰ Senatorial patrons used its triptych format to place huge figures in civic dress under the lateral segmental arches.¹⁸¹ Unlike contemporary Asiatic sarcophagi, this aedicular structure lacks

177 Morey 1924, 30 fig. 25 (Berlin A); 49 f. figs. 87–89 (Rome I); Wiegartz 1965, 21 (dating to 270 s). Cf. also Vatican, Galleria Lapidaria: Morey 1924, 37, 57 (Rome C), fig. 54; and Bari below.

178 Medici-Riccardi wedding sarcophagus, *c.* 190–200, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence: Koch 1980, 99–102; Wrede 2001, 117, pl. 10.1–3.

179 E.g. the Severan scene building of Pompey's Theatre and the Septizodium; cf. Thomas 2007b.

180 Kranz 1978, 363 n. 83a.

181 Notably the Medici-Riccardi sarcophagus (Florence, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, *c.* 220–230, with single figures under low lateral arches, either side of a pedimented doorway) and the Belvedere wedding sarcophagus (Vatican 866, *c.* 250–260, showing a couple with attendants): Wrede 2001, 119–121, pls. 11.2–3. The couple is replaced by seasons on Palazzo dei Conservatori 1185: Hanfmann 1951, ii, no. 336 fig. 33 (*c.* 240).

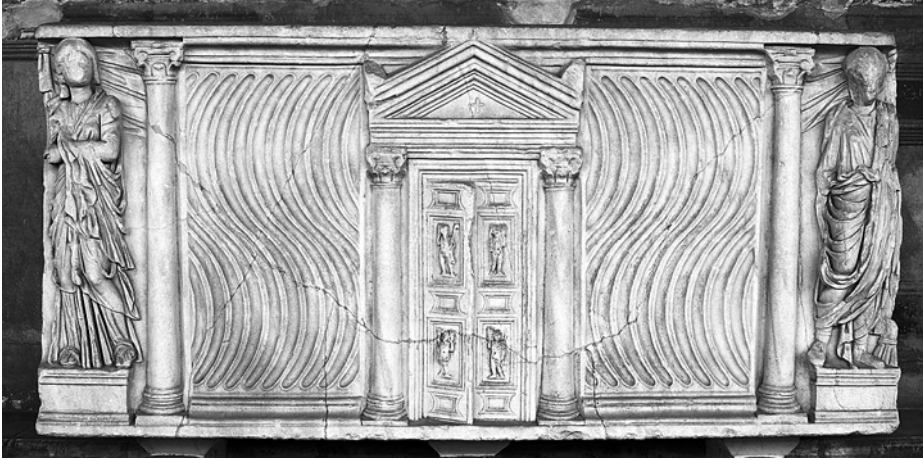


Figure 12.15: Strigillated sarcophagus in the Camposanto, Pisa. Photograph: J. Elsner.

the projections and recessions of a scenic, micro-architectural façade. As on earlier tombs, the statue's aedicular frame was what mattered most. Thus other senators chose strigillated forms with a single, central aedicular vignette to display their images.¹⁸² Spirally-fluted columns and a conch hood were no longer inseparable, but dispensable additions. Sometimes only a door with columns and pediment was suggestively displayed at the centre, with further smooth columns at the side, aligned with statuary (Figure 12.15).¹⁸³

Elsewhere in the West column sarcophagi followed a simpler arcaded scheme based on the architecture of the streetside portico.¹⁸⁴ Unlike first-century prototypes, the arcades of column sarcophagi in late-Antonine Italy flank a central pediment; spirally-fluted columns separate amorini representing the seasons, but show little replication of architectural ornament on the archivolts seen on contemporary Docimian instances.¹⁸⁵ The arcade occurred

182 E.g. Munich, Glyptothek 533, and Pisa, Camposanto C 1 est: Wrede 2001, 122–124, pl. 13.1–3.

183 Pisa, Campo Santo: Arias 1977, 59 f. A est., figs. 13–16. Cf. also Genzano, Villa Riva: Koch and Sichtermann 1982, pl. 291; Pisa, Campo Santo: Hanfmann 1951, no. 316.

184 Weidhaas 1968.

185 Prototypes, e.g. Campana plaques, Villa Giulia sarcophagus, and many funerary altars: Kranz 1978, 368. Late-Antonine, S. Lorenzo in Panisperma, Rome, and Rehalp-Friedhof, Zurich, c.160–180: *ibid.*, 361–365, pl. 157.1–2; Koch and Sichtermann 1982, 221. A later, more florid version from Tunis substitutes the Three Graces for the central door: Tunis, Musée Bardo: Hanfmann 1951, ii, no. 504. Cf. also Ferentillo, Badia di S. Pietro in Valle: *ASR* IV,4, 276, with Dionysus and satyr in the middle intercolumniation, spirally-fluted columns, Corinthian capitals, masks in spandrels, and rather agile figures on pedestals, later second century.

not only on the chest, but even in acroteria on the lid.¹⁸⁶ The Herculean Labours are presented under an arcade of six arches on a well-preserved instance from the Via Cassia (c. 175–185), which depicts the myths on three sides in the same order as on Asiatic column sarcophagi and was presumably inspired by the latter.¹⁸⁷ Here spirally-fluted columns are replaced by narrow pilasters, foliage in the spandrels by masks and winged victories, and the flat arches lack decoration. An impressive five-bay example from Rome that reappeared at a sale in December 2009 has spirally fluted columns with western capitals, masks in the spandrels, and entablatures again lacking the florid ornament of Asiatic examples, but its central, pedimented opening shows Dionysus and a satyr within a shell-niche before a squared stone wall.¹⁸⁸ Elsewhere a Mauretanian senator is shown sacrificing in military robes and joining in marriage in civil dress, within a four-arch frame distinguished by composite capitals and ornamented only by masks in the spandrels.¹⁸⁹

The perceived 'Romanness' of the arcade may be exploited on a sarcophagus in Palazzo Mattei di Giove (c. 200), where the five arches with pilasters and schematic Corinthian columns enclose figures associated with the city's origin, Mars and Venus, Mars and Rhea Silvia, and Faustulus, alongside also Cupid and Psyche, serenaded in the spandrels by trumpeting amorini.¹⁹⁰ At Aphrodisias, when the number of marble sarcophagi rose sharply after the mass extension of Roman citizenship through the *Constitutio Antoniniana* in 212, the costliest ones had arcades with a preference for spirally-fluted columns, conch niches, and a Lesbian cymatium around each arch.¹⁹¹ The western aspect of the arcade as an element of civic architecture might explain how this form could demonstrate 'a new, proud sense of belonging' to the Roman Empire and civic ideology.¹⁹² Rarer was the horizontal entablature form, though an elegant example with temple roof, Ionic capitals, two spirally-fluted columns between vertically-fluted pilasters, and three animated maenads was produced in late Antonine Tyre.¹⁹³ The arcade revived by artists from Docimium around 250 naturally included conches and spirally-fluted columns, but they also sometimes

186 Endymion sarcophagus, New York, Metropolitan Museum 47.100.4; cf. Rome, Palazzo Venezia, with alternating pediments and arches: Koch and Sichtermann 1982, 70, pls. 159, 251.

187 Rome, MNR 154592; Jacopi 1972, pls. 73–75.

188 *ASR* IV,4, no. 278, pl. 303.1; Sotheby's New York, sale N08603 (10/12/09).

189 Tipasa, Archaeological Park, c. 190: Gsell 1894, 431–437; Wrede 2001, 116 f. pl. 11.1. Cf. Pisa, Camposanto C 14 est, c. 203–220 (5 arches): Arias 1977, pls. 82, 172–174; Wrede 2001, 118 pl. 12.1.

190 *ASR* IV,4, no. 246, 277 pl. 261, 302; Perry 2005, 136–138, figs. 36–37.

191 Smith 2008, 386 f., Table 1; Işık 1984. E.g. Pisa, Camposanto C 22 est, c. 250: Arias 1977, 152–154, pls. XCIV–XCV.

192 Smith 2008, 388–392.

193 *ASR* IV,4, no. 275 A figs. 133–136; Koch and Sichtermann 1982, 562 f. fig. 555.

avoided columns altogether.¹⁹⁴ The arcades depicted on later fragments of local origin from Ephesus and Konya had flatter arch and leaf-like conch forms or empty niche-heads as on western sarcophagi.¹⁹⁵ Single arches upon spirally-fluted columns had an iconic power, whether they contained figures or not.¹⁹⁶ In northern Italy and Dalmatia arcades with spirally-fluted columns were used on pagan and Christian sarcophagi until the late fourth century.¹⁹⁷ A four-arch version at Arles has spirally-fluted columns but little architectural ornament; five- and seven-arch versions are common among fourth-century Christians, the former exemplified by the lavish sarcophagus of Probus, decorated on all sides with a combination of forms, the latter well-suited to accommodate Christ and the Apostles.¹⁹⁸ Others present fantastic images of Jerusalem, the prototype for medieval micro-architectural imaginings.¹⁹⁹ It was in the context of western, not Asiatic, aedicular forms, that the two-storey columnar façades of Junius Bassus and St Trophime were conceived: in the former, spirally-fluted columns frame Old and New Testament scenes, while the central columns framing Christ's enthronement and triumph are wrapped with vines; the enthroned Christ stepping over the arch of Caelus recalls the Velletri sarcophagus; the latter, showing Christ and the Apostles, with spirally-fluted columns throughout, was re-used as a font (Figure 12.16).²⁰⁰ The use of trees as architectonic elements, already latent in pagan sarcophagi, came to the fore in Christian configurations.²⁰¹ The caryatid motif was revitalised in Christian images of the good shepherd, although the animal-bearing posture there seems closer to the Archaic Moschophoros.²⁰²

The transfer of pagan columnar symbolism to Christian art and thought ensured the continued life of the column sarcophagus. The Psamatia Relief

194 E.g. Sagalassus B, c. 250, where the kneeling figure seems almost in place of a column: Wiegartz 1965, 170.

195 Izmir A (early fourth-century) and Konya G (c. 250–275): Wiegartz 1965, 159 f. and 163, pls. 36b, 39e.

196 E.g. Arles, containing only masks either side of an inscribed tabula ansata: Espérandieu 1907, 148 f. no. 183.

197 E.g. Tortona, S. Marciano: *ASR* III, 3, 432–435 no. 350; Split: Koch and Sichtermann 1982, 316–320, pls. 348, 350–351; cf. Lawrence 1932, 178 no. 6.

198 Wrede 2001, pl. 21.2; Lawrence 1932, 140–148, 167–171; cf. Koch 2000, 147.

199 St Peter's, Cappella Colonna; Milan: Wrede 2001, pls. 22.3, 23.1–2; Bucher 1976.

200 Bassus, Vatican: Lawrence 1932, 171 no. 69; Malbon 1990, 39 f., fig. 44. St Trophime, Arles: *ibid.*, fig. 2; Elsner 2009, 191, fig. 12.

201 Villa Medici sarcophagus, with Dionysiac scenes, third century (Koch and Sichtermann 1982, 116, fig. 121); Attic sarcophagus, Academy, Athens (*ibid.*, 426, fig. 460); Lawrence 1932, 171–173 fig. 64.

202 E.g. 'Three Shepherds sarcophagus' (Vatican, Lat. 191 A): caryatid-like shepherds hold sheep like baskets; their leggings, on ornate pedestals, are 'spirally-fluted'; vintage-gathering cupids play on vines behind.

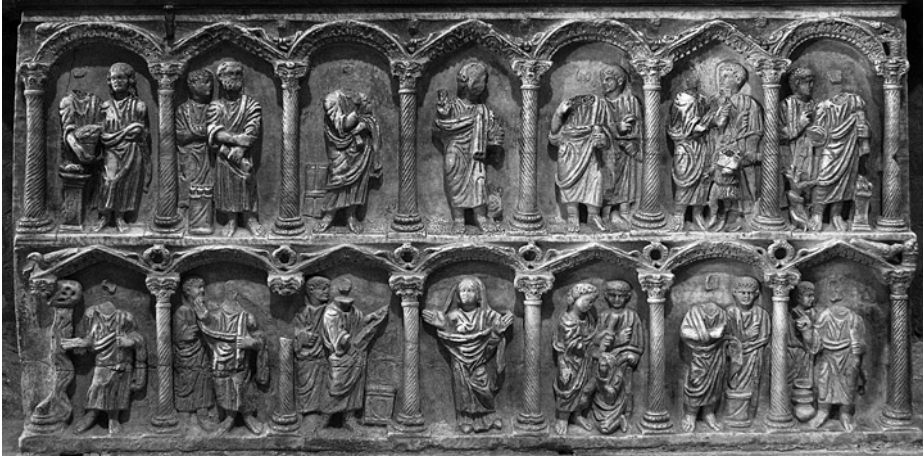


Figure 12.16: ■Text fehlt!!!!!!■

(Figure 12.2) was first re-used as an ornamental relief in a sacred building, perhaps the church of St Stephen.²⁰³ Then built into a wall in an underground chamber of the Sulu Monastery, it was framed by icons of the Virgin and the Archangel Michael.²⁰⁴ The sarcophagus of Barbatianus (c. 440), re-used in Ravenna cathedral in the thirteenth century, is decorated with shell-niches and spirally-fluted columns, with a figure of Christ at the centre.²⁰⁵ More than one column sarcophagus were combined to make a bishop's tomb at Myra.²⁰⁶ The eleventh-century image of Christ and the Apostles on a marble lintel at St-Genis-des-Fontaines seems modelled on early Christian column sarcophagi.²⁰⁷ In S. Nicola at Bari the tomb of Archbishop Helias recycled a row of bearded 'philosopher' figures in conches with spiral columns, one of the latest works of the Docimian masters, converting the third-century image of the intellectual into one of the church fathers.²⁰⁸ His marble throne rests on support figures in the classical tradition straining under its weight, illustrating, like the reuse of the Velletri sarcophagus, how the metaphor of support lying behind the creation of column sarcophagi under the Antonines remained vital in medieval micro-architecture over a millennium later.²⁰⁹

203 Schemann 1999, with previous literature.

204 Effenberger 1990, 79.

205 *ASR* VIII,2, 63 f. , B10, pl. 50; cf. B12 (pl. 49.2), Ariosti-Fontana family, S. Francesco, Ferrara, 5th century.

206 Morey 1924, 35 f. fig. 42; Wiegartz 1965, 165.

207 Hearn 1981, 27 f. fig. 5 (dated 1020/1).

208 Morey 1924, fig. 79; cf. Zanker 1995, Borg-Witschel 2001, 112 f.

209 Hearn 1981, 80–85, figs. 56–57 (dated 1098).

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